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Mohd Norbayusri Baharudin, Mahadzirah Mohamad, Fazida Karim

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Managing, Profiling and Family Support of Malaysian Women Drug Abuse Inmates.

Mohd Norbayusri Baharudin, Mahadzirah Mohamad, Fazida Karim
Faculty of Business and Management, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin, Terengganu Darul Iman,
Malaysia

Abstract

Women engaging in the use of drugs have not only adverse effects on the country but also impose significant challenges in managing their incarceration and maintaining stable family structures. The review, therefore, aims to identify the approach of Malaysian Prison Department (PRIDE) in managing women's drug abuse inmates as well as to explore their addiction experiences and, to determine the extent of family relationships they have by applied quantitative approach and cross-sectional analysis. One hundred fifty women respondent selected from the random stratified sample of Kajang Women Prison, Selangor inmates. Data then analyzed by using descriptive analysis. Results from this study provide an insight into the practical method by PRIDE to reduce demand through drug treatment and rehabilitation and to reduce supply and improving detection. The results of the study showed that majority of the respondents were Malay, Muslim, age range between 31 to 40 years, highest education level at SPM/MCE/SPVM and still single. More than half of the respondents were self-employed with monthly income between RM1001.00 to RM2000.00. A majority had been imprisonment between two to five times, with six to ten years length of addiction and, methamphetamines become the most drug had been abuse. Finding also showed that the majority of drug inmates engaged in a high level of family relationship. Findings from this research yielded vast implications to improve drug abuse safety and security as well as treatment and rehabilitation programs, particularly among women drug abuse inmates in Malaysia.

Keywords: Family Support, Drug Abuse, Woman, Inmates, Prison.

Introduction

Women are an integral part of the nation's vital assets that contribute to the development of the country and community. Although Malaysian women have achieved such great success in the country's development, there are still many challenges and barriers that may affect women's role and status in moving forward such as their involvement in crime and drug abuse that have forced them entering prison. Being imprisonment is an unusual experience that requires a complex series of challenges. Usually, women inmates are subject to various layers of constraint and deprivation, both the intrinsic punishment imposed by all inmates and the patriarchal abuse of culture are they endure (Fehrmann, 2019). A report by World Female Imprisonment List in 2017 more than 714,417 women

detained as pretrial detainees, remands or imprisoned and prosecuted in correctional facilities worldwide, representing 6.9% of the total population (Walmsley, 2015). In certain countries, including Malaysia, women inmates have increased significantly. Their life regulated by a set of regulations and laws as their activity closely monitored and recorded. They legally held, not voluntarily detained, which results in an unpleasant situation for most of them that correspond to their conduct (Mohamad et al., 2019; Mohamad, Ali, et al., 2017).

Malaysian Prison Department (PRIDE) reported there are 3,882 women inmates in 2017, 4,166 in 2018, and 4,373 in 2019, which more than half involved with drug cases (Jabatan Penjara Malaysia, 2020). It showed significant increases for the past three years. Currently, there are 20 institutions placed women inmates in various categories of offences all over Malaysia (Jabatan Penjara Malaysia, 2020). Most of them involved with drug-related laws consist of Dangerous Drugs Act 1952, Drug Dependents (Treatment and Rehabilitation) Act 1983, Dangerous Drugs (Special Preventive Measures) Act 1985, Dangerous Drugs (Forfeiture of Property) Act 1988 and Sale of Drugs Act 195 (Morgan & Morgan, 2018). When serving their sentence, it is essential to gain support from others, especially from family members. A research finding by (Brannigan et al., 2002) proved that when family ties are active, the tendency for an individual to commit deviant behaviour becomes lesser. There is also evidence that supports the statement that it is essential to maintain and retain family ties that ensure strong positive influence to offenders upon release (Visher et al., 2011). Thus, family support during incarceration becomes a paramount factor in ensuring life free from crime.

Literature Review

Substance abuse has a detrimental impact on health, including poor living qualities and psychological issues (Mohamad et al., 2018) and, have a significant potential to twist abuser behaviour to criminal behaviour and delinquency because of drug misuse (Farrow & French, 1986; Harrison & Gfroerer, 1992; Kendler et al., 2019). Involvement of women with drug abuse often leads to social problems such as prostitution, moral collapse, and can lead to health problems such as HIV / AIDS infection (Wilson & Kelling, 1982). Various factors contribute to behaviour crime and drug abuse (Mohd Nor et al., 2019). Previous scholars divided into two factors; social or environmental factors such as financial problem, lower level of education, family problems, and lack of religion practice (Austin et al., 1992; Basir, 2002) and, psychological factor such as mental illness, anxiety, depression and stress (Herrera, & McCloskey, 2003; Putkonen et al., 2003; Zimmer-Gembeck & Geiger & Crick, 2005). Previous studies also proved that women substance abusers potentially have psychological problems (Alvarez et al., 2004; Boyas et al., 2019; Mann et al., 2004; Zimmermann et al., 2004). They might experience post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, anxiety, affective bipolar disorder, phobias, psychosocial disorders and stress-related disorders (Back et al., 2011; Birkeland et al., 2017; Brady et al., 1998; Bremer-Landau & Caskie, 2019; Goncharenko et al., 2019; Mendelsohn & Sewell, 2004; Ronzitti et al., 2019).

Although cases of drug abuse among women showed a decline in their percentage, the impact of women's involvement in drug abuse activities need to be address seriously because they need to cope with stigmatization by public (Greenfield et al., 2007; Lal et al., 2015) due to failure to meet the aspirations and demands of life-related to women's moral principles. Besides, women involved with substance abuse are also considered by the community to be less functioning (Back et al., 2011;

Chatham et al., 1999) to play a role in child care and the formation of a prosperous family (Davis, 1990; Ornoy et al., 2010). As a parent, she often fails to perform well (Cormier et al., 2004; Grella et al., 2008), lack emotional needs of children cannot be fulfilled (Moran et al., 2001), and children at risk for physical or mental abuse (Keen, 2000).

Past research has shown that the recovery process for substance misuse may involve family members, social-cultural and economic elements (Embleton et al., 2013). In determining the success of a drug addiction recovery, family institutions are the major institutions that need to play an essential role in the life of the addict especially in the process of recovery (Fauziah et al., 2012). The active engagement during the phase of recovery among family members produced more excellent outcome than those without family support (Foster et al., 2012). Lack of family support created problems with drug abuse treatment (Chie et al., 2015). Family support is an ongoing cycle between parents and children, and, between the siblings that occur in our everyday lives. There seems to be no precise definition for the family support, since the support provided by the family is comprehensive, including the physical and emotional aspects. (Fazillah et al., 2018), and, based on the literature, four supports commonly discussed; emotional support, information support, instrumental support and social championships (Toner & Velleman, 2014). Many scholars looking into men inmates compared to women inmates and this scenario has contributed to a rich body of knowledge among men inmates and usually considered as the norm compared to women inmates (Fehrmann, 2019). There is a limited understanding of how women inmates undergo prison (Fehrmann, 2019), especially among women drug abuse inmates. These scenarios need to be tackle seriously, as the problem appears a negative impact on individuals, family institutions and the country.

PRIDE has implemented rehabilitation program for the women drug abuse inmates (Hashim et al., 2018), little is known about the framework of implementation by the department, the demographic and, the level of family support among women drug abuse inmates. With such information, probably it might provide relevant and beneficial information to the people and, to the community. Therefore, this study will discuss PRIDE experience in managing women drug abuse inmates, describing the experience of drug abuse inmates, and measuring the level of family relationships while undergoing rehabilitation programs in the prison.

Methodology

The structured of the recent study applied quantitative cross-sectional study, involves collecting data on a single sample of a population that is studied once based on existing respondents' attributes (Malhotra et al., 2007). The study also applied the descriptive analysis, as to describe the characteristics of variables (Hussin et al., 2014).

Participants - Women drug abuse inmates in Women Kajang Prison, Selangor, Malaysia selected as a participant for the study. The 182 sets of questionnaires distributed to the respondent using simple random sampling. The 150 of the inmates submitted the questionnaires. In this respect, the response rate was 82.42%.

Instruments - i) Women drug abuse inmates demographic – It contains questions related to the background and experience misuse of the drug. Respondents might make choices based on the statement of the item that best suits them. ii) Family relationship – Adapted from a Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) instrument consisting of 12 items (Zimet & Gregory., 2016). For this study, only four items counted as it related to the family relationship by using a scale, 1 for strongly disagree to 10 for strongly agree. Composite reliability with greater than 0.6 is required. In this study, the reliability value obtained was 0.876.

Statistical Analysis: Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Science for Windows version 25.

Results and Analysis

There are three main findings in this section. First, PRIDE experienced in managing women drug abuse inmates. Second, the demographics of women drug abuse inmates and third, the level of a family relationship while women drug abuse inmates were undergoing incarceration.

Pride Experience

Reducing demand through drug treatment and rehabilitation – Malaysian Prison Department (PRIDE) is a countrywide professional correctional entity. As a detention and rehabilitation agency, it has the consistency and pragmatic machinery and human resource strength to execute the vision, mission and objectives that related (Malaysia Prison Department, 2012). In order to reshape and modify the behaviour of inmates, the department introduced the Human Development Program (Morgan & Morgan, 2018). As the holistic approach program, it has a specific module for women drug abuse inmates consisted of four phases aims to build a character of inmates, through an effective and efficient recovery system so that they can return to society as responsible and productive individuals based on the formation of attitudes, skills and knowledge.

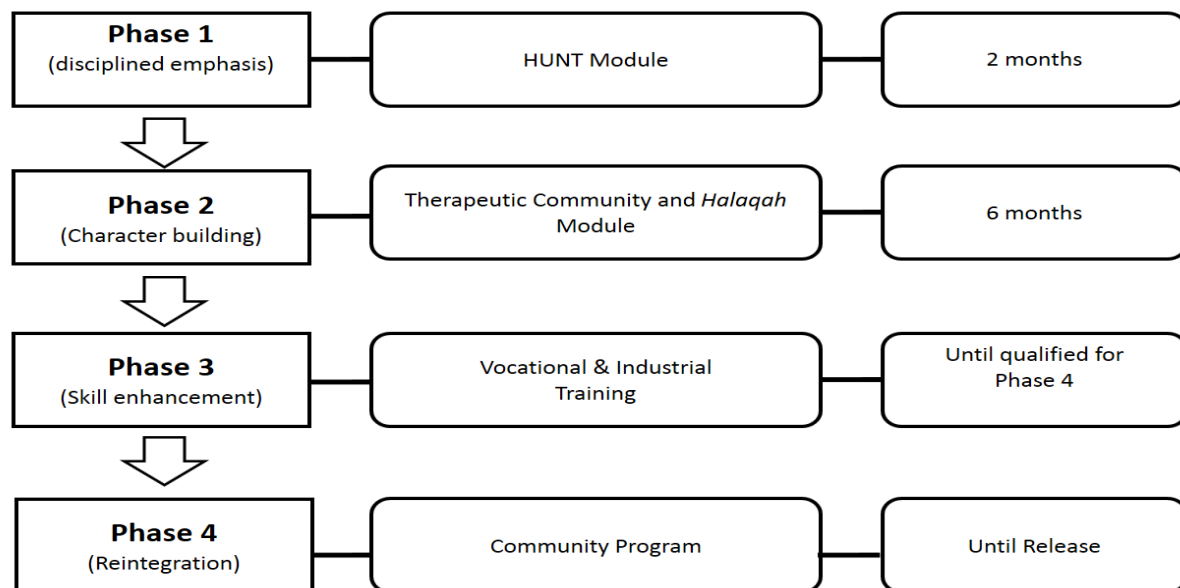


Figure 1. A framework of PRIDE drug rehabilitation program (Morgan & Morgan, 2018)

PRIDE staff have to make the distinction between short-sentence inmates (imprisonment less than six months) and long-sentenced inmates (imprisonment six months and above) as it affects the rehabilitation and treatment of female drug abuse inmates within the framework of the Human Development Program (Morgan & Morgan, 2018). In phase 1, a psycho-education approach derived from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA, 1999). It requires female drug abuse inmates completing HUNT module acronym of "help yourself no suffer no tears", focusing on the early recovery rehabilitation (Morgan & Morgan, 2018). In phase 2, they have to participate in either psychosocial approach, Therapeutic Community (TC) module or psycho-spiritual approach, *Halaqah* module (Morgan & Morgan, 2018). The TC is a psycho-social approach applies a hierarchical peer pressure and recovery structure which represents enhanced personal and social responsibility (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2016). It is applicable for female substance abuser treatment, role model concept, peer-to-peer, family-oriented for them to live together (De Leon & Jainchill, 1991; Eliason, 2006; Fazly et al., 2019; Possick & Itzick, 2018). Whereas *Halaqah* is a psycho-spiritual approach which strengthens female drug abuse inmates knowledge, practice and identity as Muslim through the fundamental concept of Islam (Dakir et al., 2015; Ibrahim, 2011; Morgan & Morgan, 2018). After they go through the treatment for a minimum of six months, women drug abuse inmates qualify to proceed to phase 3 of vocational and industrial training. In a last stage of phase 4, they might involve with community program until release (Morgan & Morgan, 2018). The Human Development Program is a formal framework for all inmates and has a specific module for women drug abuse inmates where they need to perform in order to get a positive impact on their recovery process.

Reducing supply and improving detection - Drug is a severe issue in prison, have a demand and supply through transaction among inmates, staff and others visitor-related (King, 1991; Stevens, 1997). According to section 58 of Prison Act 1995, *a person who smuggles or attempts to smuggle shall be liable to excellent not exceeding ten thousand ringgit or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years or to both* (Laws of Malaysia, 1995). PRIDE performs various processes to track illegal drugs that smuggled into prison (Morgan & Morgan, 2018).

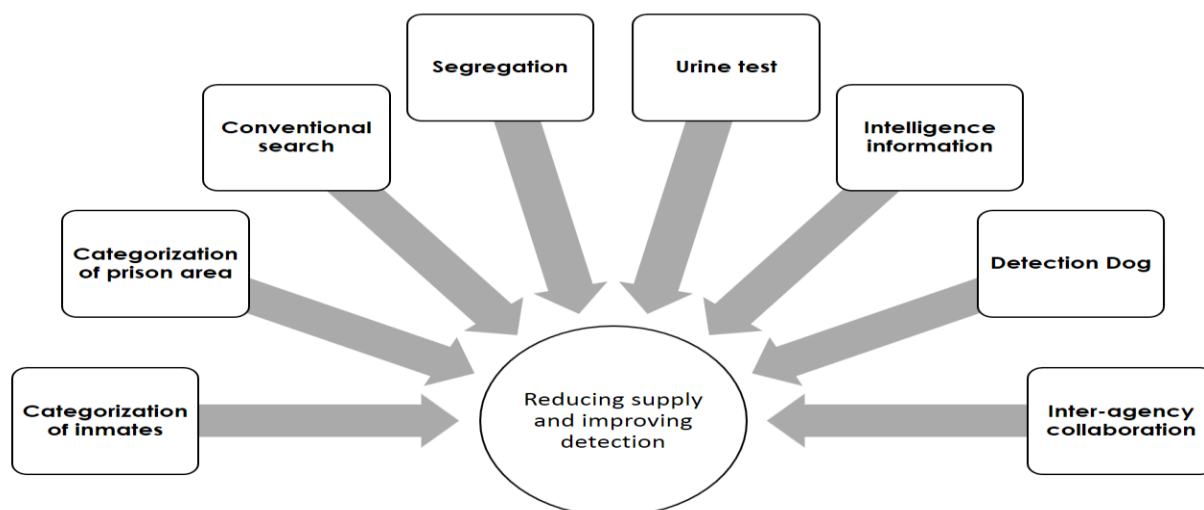


Figure 2. Diagram of PRIDE reducing supply and improving detection
(Morgan & Morgan, 2018)

Categorization of inmates is the processes for screening women drug abuse inmates is through categorization (Laws of Malaysia, 1995) such as convict and unconvicted, drugs and non-drugs cases, and other categorization related. Whereas categorization of prison is the process separated between the main prison compound and outer compound, decided by the prison management for the community cohesion and the well-being of the offender (Laws of Malaysia, 1995). As a way for women drug abuse inmates free from any substance, conventional searching practically applied by staff for checking inmates either by pat-down search, strip search, intimate search and full-body scanning in such circumstances as the day of admission into prison, after admission, when being taken to prison from any other approved places (Laws of Malaysia, 1995). For those suspected of smuggling substances articles, they would be segregated, for a period as necessary, and if guilty, it will be referred to the police for investigation and charge in the court of law for offence of drugs possession (Laws of Malaysia, 1995). Women drug abuse inmates also require to have a urine test randomly depending on the situation for the security purpose. Rather than that detecting dog, intelligent information and inter-agency collaboration also been applied for reducing supply and improving detection as stated in the Prison Act and, the Commissioner General's Standing Order.

Demographic Profile

In a current study, among 150 respondents involved, the majority were Malay (66%) followed by Indian (20.7%), Chinese (11.3%) while the remaining were other races (2%). Corresponding with the race, the majority of them are Muslims (71.3%), followed by Hindu (12.7%), Buddhist (7.3%), Christians (6.7%) and, others (2%). The majority of the respondents are between the age of 31 to 40 years (32.7%), followed by 21 to 30 years and 41 to 50 years (27.3%) and, more than 50 years (12.7%). In examining the marital status, 44% were single while 20.7% were married. About 33.3% reported were widowers and, 2% were spouse dead. About 32% respondent reported that they had completed SRP/ LCE/PMR as the highest level of education. The majority of them (35.3%) have completed SPM/MCE/SPVM. About 3.3% have completed STPM/HSC/STAM. However, only 18% have completed primary school, and unfortunately, about 0.7% have never been to school. Only 4.7% have completed a tertiary level.

Table 1: Demographic profile of women drug abuse inmates

Personal Detail	n (150)	% (100)	Personal Detail	n (150)	% (100)
Race			Previous work		
Malay	99	66.0	Unemployed	10	6.67
Chinese	17	11.33	Self employed	92	61.33
Indian	31	20.67	Government	9	6.0
Others	3	2.0	Private	39	26.0
Religion			Income (RM)		
Muslim	107	71.33	< 1000	50	33.33
Buddhist	11	7.33	1001.– 2000	65	43.33
Hindu	19	12.67	2001 – 3000	22	14.67
Christian	10	6.67	3001 – 4000	9	6.0
Others	3	2.0	> 4000	4	2.67
Age			Number of incarcerations		
21 – 30 years	41	27.3	1 time	26	17.33
31 – 40 years	49	32.7	2 – 5 times	61	40.67
41 – 50 years	41	27.3	6 – 9 years	54	36.0
> 51 years	19	12.7	>10 times	9	6
Marital Status			length of addiction		
Single	66	44.0	1 – 5 years	78	52.0
Married	31	20.7	6 – 10 years	43	28.67
Widower	50	33.3	11 – 15 years	20	13.33
Spouse died	3	2.0	>16 years	9	6.0
Education level			Type of drug abuse		
No schooling	1	0.67	Opioid	92	61.3
Primary school	27	18.0	Methamphetamine	96	64.0
SRP/ LCE/PMR	48	32.0	Marijuana	48	32.0
SPM/MCE/SPMV	53	35.33	Depression	27	18.0
STPM/STAM/HSC	5	3.33	Hallucinogen	16	10.7
Certificate level	9	6.0	Inhalant	10	6.7
Tertiary level	7	4.67			

For the previous work and monthly income, the majority were self-employed (61.3%), followed by private sector (26%) and, government (6%). Whereas about 6.7% are unemployed. Due to the monthly income, the majority of the respondents (43.3%) earn a monthly income between RM1001.00 to RM2000.00, followed by 33.3% of the respondents earn less than RM1000.00. About 14.7% earn between RM2001.00 to RM3000.00, (6%) earn between RM3001.00 to RM4000.00 and only 2.7% earn more than RM4000.00. Based on a survey, about 17.3% were first time entering prison. Meanwhile, the highest was between 2 to 5 times represented 40.67%, followed by 6 to 9 times, 36% and, 6% for more than ten times.

Analysis of the aspects of length of addiction found that the period between 1 to 5 years represented the highest time (52%), followed by (28.7%) of the respondents had billed within 6 to 10 years, while the remaining (13.3%) of the respondents had billed within 11 to 15 years. The results showed only (6%) had been addicted to drugs in the past for more than 16 years. This long period of drug addiction is often associated with relapses where addicts find it difficult for fully recover from the effects of drugs (Azmi et al., 2018; Fitzpatrick et al., 2019; Norcross et al., 2011; Velicer et al., 1990). From the survey, the result showed that the highest type of drug abuse was methamphetamines (64%), and closely followed by opioid (61.3%). About 32% misuse marijuana, 18% for depression drug, 10.7% for hallucinogen and, about 6.7% misuse inhalant. The results of this study are in contrast to the study conducted by Asmawati & Fatimah (2005), who found that the trend of heroin drug use was a popular drug used by women drug users over the last eight years. However it was in line with a report by National Anti-Drug Agency stated that methamphetamine was the highest type of drug misuse in Malaysia (National Anti-Drugs Agency, 2017) and most significant misuse for women incarceration previously (Vik & Ross, 2003).

Level of Family Support

The results of the study showed that the level of family support, the highest was high, 70% followed by moderate 18%. It gives the impression that the family is paying attention and aware of their situation. Only 12% recorded low of family support.

Family relationship	N = 150	(%)
Low (< 5.0)	18	12.0
Moderate (5.01 – 7.5)	27	18.0
High (7.51 – 10.0)	105	70.0

A family needs to give positive support to women drug abuse inmates for staying healthy in a recovery process. It based on the results of the study “my family really tries to help me” (item 1), when women drug abuse inmates in a hard time. As a result, the mean score was 8.19 and, and the most massive scale is 10, strongly agree, representing 54.7%. The result showed that the emotional support by family highly perceived by women drug abuse inmates where it showed the mean score of 7.92 (item 2) with the most massive scale is 10, strongly agree, representing 44.7%. Ongoing family support is essential not only during the early stages of the treatment and recovery process but throughout the recovery process. Miserable and discouraging family support is the cause of relapse (Brown et al.,

1986; Norcross et al., 2011; Takano et al., 2020). The result of this study also proved that family members often visit them at prison based on the high score of "I can talk about my problem with my family" (item 3) with the mean score of 7.91 and the most massive scale is 10, strongly agree, representing 46%. The findings of this study also illustrate that excellent support, guidance provided by family members can have a positive impact of the addiction recovery process, helping improve well-being, quality of life, and psychological functioning as well helps reduce the risk of relapses (Copello et al., 2005; Mohamad, Karim, et al., 2017). It is in line with the score for item 4, "my family is willing to help me make decisions" where the most massive scale is 10, strongly agree, 42% and the mean score is 7.61. As such, families are encouraged to remain steadfast and never hesitated to provide support to women drug abuse inmates for a better result in a recovery process.

No	Item	(%)										mean
		1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 Strongly agree	
1	My family tries to help me	5.3	2.0	2.0	0.7	8.7	1.3	9.3	6.7	9.3	54.7	8.19
2	I get the emotional help and support I need from my family	6.0	3.3	1.3	2.0	6.7	3.3	8.7	9.3	14.7	44.7	7.92
3	I can talk about my problem with my family	6.0	2.7	2.7	0.0	7.3	5.3	6.7	13.3	10.0	46.0	7.91
4	My family is willing to help me make decisions	8.0	2.0	2.0	4.0	7.3	4.7	7.3	12.7	10.0	42.0	7.61

Overall, the results of this study appeared to contradict the findings of many previous researchers. Most of previous researchers found that associate broken families, conflicts and crisis as the factors contributing to the prevalence and involvement of youth with unhealthy social symptoms such as drug abuse and alcohol (Copello et al., 2005; Kane et al., 2019; Lerner & Galambos, 1998; Mallett et al., 2005; Schulenberg & Maggs, 2002; Shin et al., 2019). The different findings from this study may be due to cultural differences, trends and current lifestyle changes in line with the rapidly expanding national development. Positive family relationships not only create harmony but also prevent negative behaviour tendencies (Kumpfer et al., 2003; Lewis, 2020).

Conclusion

This study had to look into PRIDE experienced in managed women drug abuse inmates. It also had described their demographic as well as analyzed the level of their family relationship. It is hope it will appear positively impacted to relevant individuals and parties such as counsellors, rehabilitation staff, social workers, students. Perhaps it also provided input value to PRIDE that are continually facing challenges in successful rehabilitation, a conducive climate and strategic integration. Additionally, the diversity of the inmates' backgrounds need to be tackled efficiently by PRIDE in term of safety and security and, rehabilitation and recovery. This current study also might provide new inputs to design and make improvements to existing security procedures and rehabilitation treatment modules. Also, it gives family institutions a unique awareness of their essential role in helping the inmates perform in their recovery process as ongoing social support from family members can prevent relapse as they

continue to adopt a healthier lifestyle, free from the influence of misuse drugs and help reduce the rate of recidivism among drug addicts in Malaysia.

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